

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-09

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:PFOR, US, VN

SUBJECT: TEXT OF STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN WOLFF TO PRESS
MAY 19, 1977

1. THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT AS READ TO
THE PRESS MAY 19 BY CONGRESSMAN LESTER WOLFF, CHAIRMAN OF
THE HIRC SUBCOMMITTEE FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: GOOD MORNING, THANK YOU FOR COMING. FOR
MORE THAN THREE YEARS NOW WE HAVE BEEN HEARING OF SO-CALLED
SECRET UNDERSTANDINGS NEGOTIATED IN 1973 WITH THE GOVERN-
MENT OF NORTH VIETNAM BY FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON AND FORMER
SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER.

INITIAL WORD OF THESE UNDERSTANDINGS AND REFERENCE TO AN
ACTUAL LETTER FROM MR. NIXON AND MR. KISSINGER IN THE PAST
HAVE ALWAYS INDICATED THAT NO SECRET AGREEMENTS WERE MADE.
TODAY I AM RELEASING DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE THAT MR. NIXON
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DID INDEED WRITE PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG ON FEB. 1, 1973,
DISCUSSING \$3.25 BILLION IN RE-CONSTRUCTION AID, PLUS AN
ADDITIONAL \$1.5 BILLION OF POST-WAR ASSISTANCE.

I AM RELEASING THIS MATERIAL TODAY AND I HAVE PURSUED THIS
MATTER FOR SEVERAL MONTHS BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THE EVENTS
OF 1973 HAVE CONFUSED THE ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS.

IF THIS CONFUSION IS TO BE ALLEVIATED, AND PROGRESS
ACHIEVED IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS THE EVENTS OF 1973 MUST BE
CLARIFIED, THEN PUT BEHIND US.

LET ME ALSO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT I CONSIDER THE RELEASE OF
THESE DOCUMENTS TODAY TO BE AN HISTORIC EVENT IN EVERY
SENSE OF THE WORD; SPECIFICALLY, THAT NOTHING WHICH WAS
SAID IN 1973, OR WHICH WILL BE SAID NOW THAT DOCUMENTS
DETAILED THESE EVENTS ARE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC, SHOULD
BE CONSTRUED TO HOLD FALSE HOPE FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
VIETNAM THAT PROMISES MADE IN 1973 CAN BE CONSIDERED VALID
TODAY.

AS HAS BEEN FIRMLY INDICATED BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION,
BY THE CONGRESS, AND BY MR. NIXON HIMSELF IN HIS LETTER OF
MAY 14 TO ME, THE EVENTS OF THE PAST HAVE NO BEARING ON
ANY FUTURE AGREEMENTS WHICH MAY BE NEGOTIATED. THE PARIS
PEACE ACCORDS HAVE BEEN BREACHED AND THEREFORE VOIDED BY
THE ACTIONS OF ALL OF THE SIGNATORS.

SO MY PURPOSE IN RELEASING THIS MATERIAL TODAY IS NOT TO
CREATE FALSE HOPES, BUT TO HELP CLARIFY THE HISTORICAL RE-
CORD SO THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE PRIVY TO WHAT THE
VIETNAMESE HAVE KNOWN FOR FOUR YEARS.

I FEEL ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT POINT WHICH MUST BE MADE TODAY
IS THAT THE RELEASE OF THESE SECRET NEGOTIATIONS UNDER-
SCORES THE NECESSITY OF CONDUCTING DIPLOMACY IN AS OPEN
A FASHION AS IS POSSIBLE. THIS COURSE THE CARTER ADMINIS-
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TRATION IS APPARENTLY DETERMINED TO FOLLOW, AND I HAVE
BEEN PERSONALLY GRATIFIED AT THE FULL COOPERATION AND
CONSULTATION WHICH MY SUBCOMMITTEE AND I HAVE ENJOYED WITH
SECRETARY VANCE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE, AND THEIR
COLLEAGUES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

AS THESE DOCUMENTS MAKE CLEAR, AND AS MR. NIXON CONFIRMS
IN HIS LETTER TO ME, THE CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY MISLED AS TO THE VERY EXISTENCE
OF ANY SECRET NEGOTIATIONS, MUCH LESS AS TO THE ACTUAL
CONTENT OF THE AGREEMENTS.

AS A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE DURING
THE CRUCIAL EVENTS OF 1973 I PERSONALLY LISTENED TO MR.
KISSINGER, AND HIS PREDECESSOR, WILLIAM ROGERS, DENY WHAT
WAS IN FACT THE TRUTH.

AS RECENTLY AS LAST SUMMER, THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON
AMERICANS MISSING IN ACTION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WAS TOLD

BY A STATE DEPARTMENT WITNESS THAT NO SECRET ARRANGEMENTS ON RECONSTRUCTION AID HAD BEEN MADE, AND DR. KISSINGER'S PREVIOUS TESTIMONY TO THAT EFFECT WAS RECALLED AND AGAIN CONFIRMED.

THIS LEGACY OF SECRECY HAS BEEN IMMEASURABLY HARMFUL TO US OVER THE YEARS. BUT I AM HOPEFUL THAT THE DETERMINATION OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO BE OPEN AND ABOVE BOARD WITH CONGRESS, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE WORLD WILL BE ACCEPTED AT FACE VALUE BY THE VIETNAMESE, AND WITH ANY WITH WHOM WE DEAL IN THE FUTURE.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSALS IN PARIS NOW BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM ARE GOOD, CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSALS, FREE FROM THE TAINT OF SECRECY. I HOPE THAT THE VIETNAMESE WILL PUT THE EVENTS OF THE PAST BEHIND THEM, AND SEE TODAY'S PROPOSALS IN LIGHT OF THE REALITY WHICH EXISTS.

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FOR THE RECORD, I SHOULD NOTE THAT WHEN I WROTE BOTH MR. NIXON AND MR. KISSINGER ON FEB. 22 OF THIS YEAR ASKING THEM TO RELEASE TRUE COPIES OF THEIR CORRESPONDENCE AND AGREEMENTS OF 1973, I WAS ADVISED THAT KISSINGER WAS NO LONGER AT THE DEPARTMENT. MR. KISSINGER'S OFFICE ADVISED ME TO SEEK OUT THIS INFORMATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

EARLY LAST WEEK, GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT CALLED ME ON MR. NIXON'S BEHALF, AND SAID THE FORMER PRESIDENT WOULD BE IN CONTACT WITH ME. ON SATURDAY THE 14TH, THE LETTER I AM TODAY RELEASING WAS MAILED FROM SAN CLEMENTE.

AS A FINAL NOTE BEFORE OPENING UP THE DISCUSSION FOR QUESTIONS, I WANT TO MAKE CLEAR MY POSITION ON THE ISSUES OF REPARATIONS AND OUR MEN MISSING IN ACTION:

WE DO NOT BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE ANY LINKAGE BETWEEN RECONSTRUCTION AID AND THE MIA ISSUE. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS INDICATED AND THE CONGRESS IN ITS RECENT VOTE HAS UNDERLINED THE FACT THAT THE U.S. CANNOT GIVE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAM AT THIS TIME. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOK HAS MADE THIS POSITION CLEAR IN PARIS. THE QUESTION OF ANY FUTURE U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAM WILL BE DEPENDENT ON FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS, AND THE WILL OF CONGRESS.

THE QUESTION OF INFORMATION ON OUR MIA'S, HOWEVER, IS ONE OF HUMANITARIAN CONCERN, AND WHICH HAS EXISTED INDEPENDENT OF ANY DISCUSSIONS ON OTHER TOPICS IN THIS OR ANY OTHER

YEAR.

THE MIA ISSUE AND INFORMATION WHICH VIETNAM CAN SUPPLY ON
OUR MEN IS A MATTER WHICH SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THE HUMANI-
TARIAN CONCERNS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERN-
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MENT, AND I HOPE THAT IN THE FUTURE IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
IN THIS WAY.

MY SUBCOMMITTEE HAS BEEN GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FOLLOW-
ING UP ON THE WORK OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MIA'S, AND
WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A RESOLUTION OF THIS TRAGIC
SITUATION. END TEXT.

CHRISTOPHER

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